

Putnoe Primary School

Church Lane, Bedford, MK41 0DH

Inspection dates 20–21 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils are proud of their school. They are happy to attend and keen to learn in a welcoming and bright environment.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. The school works outstandingly well to ensure that pupils are safe and secure.
- There are many exciting opportunities for pupils to appreciate the creative, artistic, sporting and musical world around them and further afield. These make an excellent contribution to pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development.
- Children make a good start in the Nursery class and in Reception. They thrive in a stimulating and fun-packed environment.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan activities that motivate pupils who listen attentively and work hard in lessons.
- Achievement is good. Progress is particularly rapid in Years 1 and 2. Many pupils attain the higher levels at the end of Year 2.
- Specific groups of pupils do well. These include disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who benefit from additional support through pupil premium funding. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress.
- The headteacher leads the school well, supported by the dedicated staff. Senior leaders check the school's work frequently. They have maintained high standards at Key Stage 1 and are committed to improving teaching to accelerate pupils' progress further at Key Stage 2.
- The governing body supports leaders well. They bring their experience to the school and know the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure pupils' attainment is higher at Key Stage 2. Some teaching has weaknesses. This means that not all pupils, particularly the most able, sustain the rapid progress they make in Years 1 and 2.
- In a few subjects, and in homework, the quality and quantity of pupils' work is not good enough.
- Not all middle leaders are effective in monitoring the quality of teaching, learning, marking and assessment in their areas of responsibility.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed all classes at least once. Inspectors also observed pupils in smaller groups. Six classes were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- One inspector undertook a learning walk. This comprised short visits to a number of lessons to speak to pupils and look at their work, examine displays, speak to teaching assistants and observe behaviour.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, two members of the governing body including the Chair of the Governing Body, and teachers who hold additional responsibilities. The lead inspector spoke to the school’s improvement adviser.
- Inspectors talked to groups of pupils, listened to them read and observed them during playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors spoke to pupils formally in a meeting and informally around the school.
- Inspectors considered the 55 replies to the staff questionnaire and 20 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View). The views of parents and carers were sought at the start of the school day as they brought their children to school.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation including the school improvement plan, safeguarding policies, minutes of meetings, information about pupils’ attainment and progress and records relating to pupils’ behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Marianick Ellender-Gele, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Tracy Fielding

Additional Inspector

Dellis Smith

Seconded Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is almost twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided to schools for pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There are 29 children in the school-run Nursery class and three Reception classes. Children attend on a full-time basis.
- The school runs a breakfast club each day and a range of activities after school.
- In September 2014, a new deputy headteacher joined the school and the Vice-Chair became Chair of the Governing Body.
- The school converted to academy status in 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2, so that it is consistently good and more is outstanding, by ensuring that:
 - teachers provide pupils with work that matches their ability to help them learn quickly, particularly the most able
 - teachers give pupils the opportunities to think for themselves to deepen their understanding
 - teachers check that the quantity and quality of pupils' work is of high quality across all subjects
 - homework is used effectively to raise standards.
- Improve the monitoring skills of middle leaders and ensure that they check the quality of teaching, learning, marking and assessment in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher, supported by governors, are taking decisive action to ensure that teaching is at least good and that pupils make good or better progress. Strategies have been most effective in the early years and Key Stage 1.
- Parents and carers who spoke to inspectors, together with almost all those who filled in the Parent View questionnaire or wrote to the inspection team, are supportive of the school's work and recognise the dedication and commitment of staff.
- Regular checks on the quality of teaching mean that senior leaders know the school's strengths and which areas need further development. When necessary, they provide effective support and challenge to individual teachers to make sure that their teaching improves.
- Staff changes are adversely affecting the headteacher's pursuit of excellence. Middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in improving the effectiveness of teaching, including the marking of pupils' work, to help pupils improve across subjects. Middle leaders lack the skills to evaluate teaching accurately in order to make it all good and more of it outstanding, and thus accelerate pupils' progress.
- Rigorous systems are in place to manage teachers' performance. Targets for staff link to the national Teachers' Standards and to the school development plan. Class teachers are held to account for the progress of pupils at frequently held pupils' progress meetings.
- Senior leaders work with an independent school improvement adviser to review all aspects of the school's work. This self-evaluation, although over-optimistic in a few areas, is used well to identify the school's priorities, plan relevant staff training and lead key projects to their successful implementation, such as the excellent new building due to accommodate the Year 6 classes and the teaching of music.
- The leadership of early years is effective. It contributes well to the good achievement and teaching in this area of the school.
- The leadership of the provision to support pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is effective. The coordinator is well organised and checks pupils' academic progress as well as their emotional and behavioural needs effectively. The teaching assistants are deployed where they are most needed. They value the useful weekly meetings with the deputy headteacher.
- Work is often creative and interesting. Staff work well together to plan for the requirements of the revised National Curriculum. A number of visitors to the school and educational trips outside school greatly enhance the curriculum and pupils' understanding of the world around them. These opportunities broaden pupils' horizons and enhance their personal development. The school is recognised for its excellent work in the creative arts and supports other schools in Bedfordshire.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. Much of this is embedded in the school's strong values and positive ethos. Pupils show mutual respect and tolerance for others and have a very clear sense of right and wrong. The school is preparing pupils well for life in modern British society. Opportunities to learn about British values, such as democracy and tolerance, are made explicit in the school's policies, on classroom displays, during assemblies and in the programme of personal, social and health education. Year 6 pupils are attentive, mature and responsible. In this respect they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupil premium funding is used well and, as a result, disadvantaged pupils do as well as their peers. Leaders analyse the effectiveness of intervention well when pupils work in small groups and in class. The school recognises that there is scope to use the teaching assistants' support more flexibly so that they also work with pupils who have the potential to do higher-level work.

- The school is using the primary school physical education and sport funding well to provide attractive equipment and a range of physical education activities, including team sport and clubs. Pupils are keen to reach the performance levels of which they are capable and enthusiastically talk about healthy lifestyles and their physical well-being. Lead practitioners and coaches are developing staff skills, leading to good achievement in competitions, particularly in dance and gymnastics.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children are outstanding. The headteacher knows the families very well. A family support worker and an educational and clinical psychologist are directly employed by the school. They ensure that children and families in need are helped as soon as issues arise. Files are in good order and communication with key agencies, such as social and welfare services, is well coordinated.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body and governors show great determination and commitment to get the best possible support for staff, pupils and senior leaders. The Chair meets the headteacher frequently and some governors visit the school regularly; these visits focus on checking progress on the priorities of the school development plan.
 - Governors receive regular reports from the headteacher and subject leaders. These give governors a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors are confident to ask challenging questions of senior leaders. However, they do not have a sufficiently accurate view of the school's performance at Key Stage 2 against similar schools and all schools nationally. The task of gathering an objective view of the school's progress to hold the school to account relies heavily on a small group of dedicated governors; this places a heavy burden on them.
 - Governors ensure that the school meets all legal requirements and that the school's finances are managed properly. They are aware of the positive impact of the pupil premium funding and the primary school funding for physical education and sport. They ensure that this additional financial resource is improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils' skills in sport.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching in the school. They take robust action to tackle underperformance on the rare occasions when it is needed. Governors ensure that staff progression through the salary scale points is tightly related to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is because leaders and staff have high expectations. Pupils are well supervised and move around the school sensibly. This was well exemplified during the unexpected evacuation of the school building following a false fire alarm. Pupils' behaviour was exemplary during this exercise. The whole school moved to the assembly point in perfect calm and control.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are well mannered, take good care of each other and show great respect for adults. A small number of pupils who, at times, find it difficult to manage their emotions and behaviour are helped to do so sensitively, yet firmly by adults and, as a result, their behaviour improves.
- Pupils listen well to their teachers and levels of concentration are good in almost all lessons. There is a buzz for learning in most classes. A younger pupil was excited about her work on the human body because, 'The visitor came with skeletons.' Some older pupils do not show as much enthusiasm for learning, particularly when teachers do not give enough opportunity for them to think about their work. Younger pupils say that their teachers make learning fun.
- Pupils enjoy taking on active roles in the school, such as helping in the library and sorting out resources. One pupil said: 'We like helping our teacher because she is nice.'
- Pupils want to come to school; their attendance is similar to the national average and punctuality is good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel safe in school and have

confidence in the adults who take care of them. Pupils understand different forms of bullying and the importance of e-safety, both when at school and at home.

- The playground is a happy, lively place. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds play together harmoniously. Pupils new to the school are helped to feel very welcome and settle in quickly.
- Pupils in the Nursery class and Reception classes learn about the school rules very quickly; they can explain what they must do to keep themselves safe when playing.
- Parents and carers who completed the Parent View survey praise the school and are happy that their children are safe and well cared for. These positive responses reflect the inspection findings.
- Pupils who need extra help are well catered for. Senior leaders know the families very well and provide excellent support at times of crisis, such as bereavement or family breakdown.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Senior leaders ensure that the quality of teaching in reading, writing and mathematics is good. As a result, pupils in almost all year groups learn well. It is clear from talking to pupils and looking at the work displayed around school and in their books that good teaching has promoted good progress over time. In some classes and subjects, however, teaching is not consistently good and not enough teaching is outstanding across the school.
- Supportive relationships in the classroom ensure that pupils have good attitudes to school and to learning in particular. They quickly and confidently learn new skills. Classrooms are bright and provide a stimulating learning environment. Almost all pupils, although less so for the oldest pupils, say that teachers and other adults encourage them to 'have a go'.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge of reading, writing and mathematics to plan lessons which capture pupils' interests and motivate them to learn. When discussing the 'for' and 'against' of play time, one pupil said that it can be sad sometimes to have to go out for break time because it stops him thinking.
- Teachers receive good training and apply new ideas to improve their practice. For example, the additional funding for physical education and sport is developing teachers' confidence and skills in teaching aspects such as gymnastics and dance. Teachers make good links between subjects so that pupils can apply their learning to real-life situations, such as linking science to physical education to learn about the heart rate and the cardio-vascular system.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils who have special educational needs, those in receipt of pupil premium funding and those who speak English as an additional language. Teaching assistants communicate with the class teacher well and know what they have to do.
- Teachers use questioning well to encourage pupils to explain their thinking and extend learning. Pupils are often asked to check their work and focus on what they need to do to improve. However, at Key Stage 2, the tasks set to improve pupils' learning are not consistently matched to their needs. Teachers make clear to pupils at the start of lessons what they are to learn but some work is either not demanding or not open-ended enough to enable pupils to think for themselves in Years 5 and 6. As a result, progress is not as rapid as it could be.
- Teachers expect pupils to present their work well but these expectations are not always carried through all subjects and in pupils' homework. Consequently, the quality and quantity of pupils' work in subjects such as languages and humanities are not high enough.
- Senior leaders are aware of the need to continue to improve the marking of pupils' work and teachers work hard at this. They regularly praise what has been done well and often provide guidance to help pupils. On occasion, marking is not frequent enough to help pupils improve their work further. The rigour in checking grammar, spelling and presentation in English and mathematics is not applied across all

subjects.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children make good progress in the early years. They settle quickly as a result of effective relationships and stimulating activities that engage their interests well. Pupils make very good progress at Key Stage 1. Progress at Key Stage 2 is not as rapid because the quality of teaching is too variable.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 who meet the required standard in the national screening check on phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is higher than average. By the end of Year 2 in 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels was above the national average in all subjects. The proportion achieving the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics was also above average. This shows very good progress from their starting points.
- The proportions of pupils achieving the required level (Level 4 and above) at the end of Key Stage 2 were better in 2014 than in 2013. Attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling was well above average. In writing and mathematics, attainment matched the national average. In reading, it was just below. The proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them in writing was slightly better than average but in reading and mathematics it was below average. The proportion of pupils making better than expected progress was below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Although the 2014 published data are not showing rapid progress, the large majority of pupils currently in Year 6 are making faster progress and attainment is rising.
- The progress of the most-able pupils is not sufficiently rapid at Key Stage 2. This is because of a legacy of staff changes and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. By the end of Year 6, a lower than average proportion reached the highest levels (Level 5 and above) in 2014. Current pupils in Year 6 have worked hard to fill any gaps in their understanding and predictions show that the proportion of the most-able pupils on track for the higher levels show improvement over last year.
- Pupils' reading skills are developed well in most years, although reading in Years 5 and 6 does not have a sufficiently high profile. Older pupils do not have sufficient guidance to choose books carefully and engage their interests and enjoyment.
- The school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities is demonstrated by the good progress of all vulnerable groups of pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress throughout the school because of well-organised provision and the well-targeted support they receive from effective and committed teaching assistants. The IPOP (International Parents of Putnoe) group contributes to celebrating the achievement of all pupils, regardless of cultures or beliefs.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. In 2014, they attained as well as other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. In grammar, punctuation and spelling they did better by about two terms. When compared with all pupils in the school, the disadvantaged pupils did as well as their peers in reading, writing and mathematics; in grammar, punctuation and spelling, they did better by about one term. This is as a result of the good support they receive.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic groups make very good progress. In 2014, their results were better than other pupils nationally and in the school. They do particularly well in mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- When looking at work in subjects other than in mathematics and English, inspectors found that pupils achieve well in the arts, physical education and sport, music and science. They do less well in homework, languages and humanities subjects.

The early years provision

is good

- The children in the early years make good progress. A significant majority of children start Reception with

skills typically below for their age, with communication and language skills being much less developed. The setting's warm, secure and well-resourced environment supports children's learning well and facilitates the development of writing and the understanding of numbers.

- In 2014, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development by the end of the Reception year was above the national average in all areas. Inspectors looked at children's work and matched it to the information gathered from current assessments. It confirms that they are on track for further improved results this year.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good. This is because teachers use the information gathered from assessment well to plan for what children need to learn next to improve their work. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points.
- There is good communication between parents and carers. They are kept informed of their child's progress through termly reports and informal weekly drop-ins to school.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants typically demonstrate high expectations of learning. Highly effective questioning encourages children to improve their work. Phonics is taught well and children are challenged to use the skills learned effectively in their reading and writing. This prepares them well for the next phase of their education.
- The early years outdoor provision is purposeful and provides opportunities for children to develop their physical, social and emotional skills as well as reinforcing their literacy and numeracy skills. School leaders are taking action to improve this area further to offer children an even wider range of outdoor activities and develop their learning through exploration and play.
- The relationship between adults and children is good. All staff ensure that children are well cared for and are kept safe. Children display positive attitudes towards learning. They are well behaved and remain focused on their work for sustained periods of time.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139519
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	461558

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	580
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amy Lumley-Wood
Headteacher	Gillian Peck
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2012
Telephone number	01234 303400
Email address	putnoeprimary@pps.bedssch.co.uk

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